

Wash Times?

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 1990

I've got a bone to pick with the FBI about its rigid interpretation of the Freedom of Information Act, with particular reference to a beautiful South African woman who did some heavy-duty spying in her Washington boudoir back in 1969 and 1970 for Fidel Castro's intelligence service.

Not for the life of me can I understand why the FBI has refused an FOI request I made several months ago for the bureau's files on the blue-eyed blonde who used her secretarial job at the South African Embassy here to bed down a mind-boggling number of diplomatic, congressional, State Department and other well-informed men for the greater glory of Marxist Cuba.

Jennifer Miles, who was then 26, went to more diplomatic parties than a society reporter and brought more than 100 love-starved admirers to her pad at the Carousel Apartments on Wisconsin Avenue.

The basic facts about Miss Miles are well known. She was recruited for the Cuban DGI intelligence service while she was a volunteer sugar cane cutter in one of the Venceremos Brigades in 1969.

Coming to the United States, she was hired by the Embassy of South Africa, and as such, had entree to a long list of diplomatic parties.

The FBI got on her trail when two FBI agents in New York were

Information not free at all for this reporter

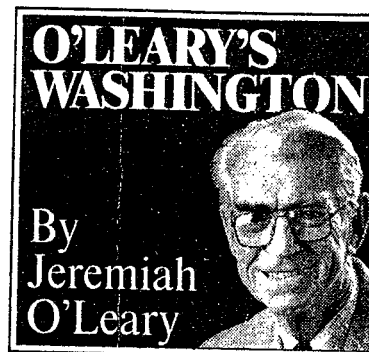


shadowing Cuban United Nations officials Orlando Prendes Gutierrez and Rogelio Rodriguez Lopez in October of 1969. Both were DGI spies.

When the two Cubans were met by a then-unknown blonde at a bar in Astoria, N.Y., one of the agents followed the woman and was startled when she boarded a train after

the rendezvous and traveled to Washington.

As soon as she let herself into the Carousel, the FBI's counterespionage machinery went into high gear and began tapping her phone, bugging her bedroom, photographing her surreptitiously and following her on her nightly rounds.



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FBI agents of that time still marvel at the steamy scenes and conversations that took place in her boudoir with important people who evidently were fond of pillow talk. Telephone taps are not the favorite occupation of many FBI agents, but none of them was ever bored listening in on Miss Miles' conquests.

In August 1970, for reasons I do not know, the FBI decided to pull the plug on the blonde Mata Hari. After secret consultation with the South African government and the State Department, it was decided to spare that government from embarrassment.

The FBI cut a deal with Gen. Hendrik Van Den Bergh, head of the State Security Bureau of South Africa, that her name and country of origin would be kept secret if

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she cooperated with investigators.

She was sent by an embassy official to deliver a sealed envelope to a room in the Washington Hotel. There she was confronted by FBI agents and South African officials with evidence of her espionage.

At first, the FBI tried to "turn" Miss Miles and recruit her as a double agent, but she refused. She tried to take refuge in the embassy of a Latin American country in Washington but was denied asylum.

She then asked one of her lovers, State Department protocol officer Saeed A. Khan, a 42-year former officer of the Bengal Lancers, what she should do.

Mr. Khan told me he didn't know she was a spy and advised her to cooperate with the FBI. She did as he suggested, making a complete statement of her activities and giving a list of about 100 conquests.

In return, she was declared persona non grata by the United States and allowed to return home. But the State Department made the an-

nouncement without naming her or her country of origin. Mr. Khan lost his job. The two Cuban officials were declared to be DGI agents and given 48 hours to leave the country.

Miss Miles turned up in Johannesburg and got a job as a secretary for a carpet company and later for a South African newspaper. When I broke the story in *The Washington Star* in 1970, Miss Miles left her job and dropped out of sight.

I concluded recently that enough time has passed to remove any national security considerations from the Miles case and sent a routine FOI request to the FBI for all files, tapes and photos of her spy activities.

What I got was a form letter from Emil P. Moschella, chief of the Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts Section, telling me that I had to submit a notarized authorization from all persons involved, or proof of their deaths, or the application would not be processed.

I can understand why the bureau would be loath to release the names

of Miss Miles' lovers, but I can imagine no reason for keeping secret the scope of her nocturnal activities.

In the past, I have seen many thousands of agent reports on the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King. When the FBI wanted to protect the privacy of a person they simply blacked out the name.

Here is a woman who evidently has not been active as a spy for 20 years and who could theoretically have pried some of the nation's deepest secrets from her collection of lovers. Presumably, if she is still alive, she is now 46 years old and has another name.

The Freedom of Information Act seems to be a tool for withholding information rather than disclosing it. It seems to me that Miss Miles lost her rights to privacy when she was put under close personal and electronic surveillance. I believe there is a public right to know what national secrets she passed along to the Cuban intelligence service and what damage was caused to our national security.

And I think the public has a right to know who spilled those secrets. The Freedom of Information Act is a cynical farce if the FBI continues to protect spies and their sources so long after their activities have ceased.

Over the years, the FBI has been quite willing to leak information to the press when it has suited its interests. The FBI tapes of the late Dr. King's amours were widely circulated and are a case in point.

O'Leary's Washington appears Mondays and Fridays.